

# How an Idea Became a **TOY**

by Meghan Murphy

**A**s I was growing up, my father and grandfather always kept a supply of coiled, plastic mesh in our garage. My sister and brother used to play with the pieces. One day they realized the material was like a spring. They would wind up the mesh, and it would shoot out of their hand. It would go *Whoosh!* What fun they had! My sister and brother had made a new toy. We called it a “spring thing.”

One day, when my sister Colleen was 12, she and her friends were playing with the spring thing. Everyone thought that the new springy toy was a lot of fun. My sister said, “I think people would buy these. We should sell them!”



Have you ever had an idea about a new toy? How is your idea similar to or different from the spring thing?

**TOY**  
Inventor

**Meghan Murphy**

1252 Toy Place Lane  
Easton, Michigan 55252  
555.622.5262

My parents agreed. That night, our family talked about starting a new company. That talk was the beginning of our toy company. Later, we found a site where we could build our factory.

How do you think the way Meghan made her toy into a product is similar to or different from the way other toys are made?

Today, we have two factories to make our toys. One factory has more than 200 workers!

Our toy is made out of plastic. We buy this material from other companies. Then our workers weave the plastic together. After this, a hot blade cuts the plastic. Each cut is the same so the toys will be the same size. The blade is so hot that it melts the plastic.


Sometimes we must search for plastic in a special color. One time, my sister thought we should make a neon blue toy. I thought it should be neon yellow. Our family voted on which color we should use. Everyone must work as a team to make the right product.

*Spring Things*






Toy Fair



**Say Something Technique** Take turns reading a section of text, covering it up, and then saying something about it to your partner. You may say any thought or idea that the text brings to your mind.




When I was 14, I went to an international toy fair. This fair brought lots of people from the toy industry together. I went to help my parents tell people about our toy.


One man at the fair, from China, had pens with foam toppers on them. I thought it would be neat to put a foam topper on our toy.

What if the foam was in the shape of a funny face or a character?


The toy would still be able to fly, but it would be even more fun!



Name another toy product you have seen, read, or heard about. How is it different from Meghan's?



I had taken a Chinese language class at school. I knew that *wán jù* means toy in Chinese. So I decided to talk to the man about creating a new product. Soon his factory in China was making foam toppers for our toys. The toppers were shaped like different things such as a bee, a clown, and a fish. Our customers liked the new funny figure on top of our toy.



In high school, I took a business class. I learned that companies used **surveys** to help them decide what products they should make or what services they should offer.

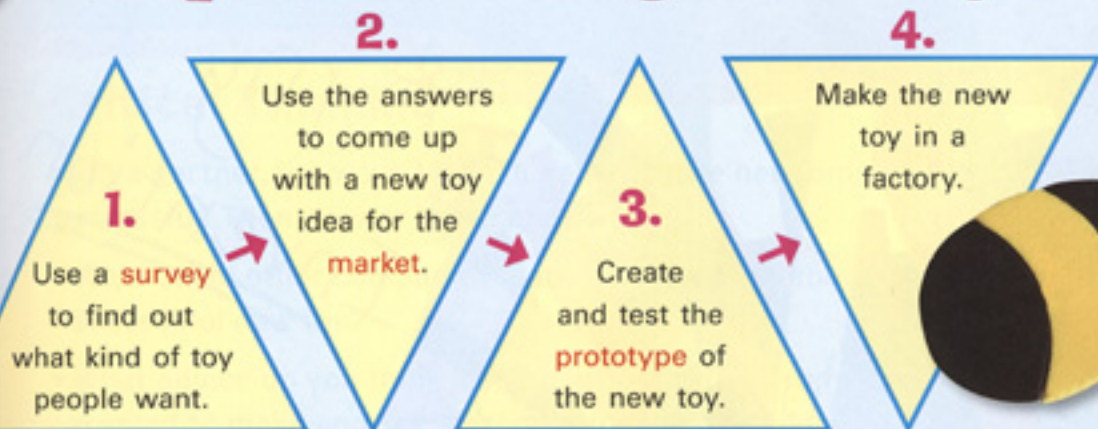
A survey is a list of questions. I created a survey about our product. I asked my classmates questions such as, "What color and characters do you like best?" I also asked, "How much would you pay for the toy?"

The survey told us about a **market** for our new product. Markets are the people who might buy a product. Using this information, our company made other toys.

Our company creates a **prototype** for each new product. A prototype is a model of what the product will look like. We test the prototype with possible buyers. If buyers like it, we make the toy in our factory!

In what ways do the *survey* and *prototype* help Meghan with her product?

## Steps for Creating a New Toy



Today, we sell our toys to schools, museums, and stores. If a company wants to have its name on our toy, we can make products just for them. The most unusual toy we ever made had a lion on top. We made it in a school's colors. The toy was a big hit. Once, we also made a hamburger toy for a restaurant. It looked silly!

Sometimes, people ask me if I always wanted to be an inventor. I explain that anyone can be an inventor. All it takes is hard work and imagination. As a young inventor, I've had the chance to meet interesting people. Also, I have experience in business. Who knows? Someday you might invent a toy of your own! The possibilities are endless.

What other inventions have you read about? How are they similar to or different from this one?



*Toy Store*



# Think and Respond

## Reflect and Write

- You and your partner read *How an Idea Became a Toy* and said something to each other about each section. Discuss your thoughts and ideas with your partner.
- On one side of an index card write a connection you made with the text. On the other side, write how that connection compares and contrasts to the information in the selection.

## Nouns in Context

Look through *How an Idea Became a Toy* for nouns. List the nouns you find. Choose ten of the nouns you found and write a paragraph about a toy you would like to make and sell.

## Turn and Talk

### MAKE CONNECTIONS: COMPARE/CONTRAST INFORMATION

Discuss with a partner what you have learned about how to compare and contrast information.

- How can comparing and contrasting information help you in your reading?

Discuss with a partner a toy that both of you enjoy. Compare and contrast that toy with the one that Meghan invented.



## Critical Thinking

With a partner, list ways Meghan helped make her company successful. Then answer these questions.

- What could other companies learn from Meghan about making a successful new toy?
- What advice do you think Meghan would give to someone who wanted to make and sell a product for the first time?